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In 344  
Housekeepers' Chat

Wednesday, October 9, 1929.

## NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Subject: "How Does Your Child Sleep?" Information from Children's Bureau, U.S. Department of Labor. Menu from Bureau of Home Economics, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Bulletin available: "Why Sleep?" U. S. Department of Labor -- Children's Bureau, Folder No. 11. (All Requests for this leaflet should be sent, as usual, to the Radio Service, U. S. D. A.)

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The other day I received a letter from a mother who is much interested in the Wednesday talks about children. "Would it be asking too much," she writes, "for you to give us some information about sleep? Getting the children to bed, at a proper bed-time, has always been a problem in our home. And is there any way to tell whether a child is getting the right kind and amount of sleep?"

Before I answered this question, I went over to the Children's Bureau of the U. S. Department of Labor, where I checked up on the important subject of sleep.

As every modern mother knows, enough sound sleep is one of the three essentials for a child's health; the other two are right food, and outdoor play in the sun. These three essentials depend on one another. If a child gets plenty of simple food, and vigorous outdoor play in the sun, he is likely to sleep well. But if his diet is improper, and he sits around all day, he may sleep poorly.

There are signs by which you may know that your child is getting enough sleep -- if he is well grown, if he has firm muscles, rounded outlines, erect posture, a rosy skin, clear eyes without circles under them, a happy disposition, and a good appetite, he is probably getting the right kind and amount of sleep.

There is another question which mothers often ask: "How much should a child sleep?"

The faster a child is growing, the more sleep he needs. A baby less than year old grows very fast, and therefore sleeps most of the time. When he gets a little older, he does not grow so fast, and therefore does not need so much sleep. After about a dozen years, when the child enters the adolescent stage, growth speeds up again, and he needs even more sleep than the child a year or two younger. Many parents do not know this, and they permit these older children to stay up later than the younger ones. I know it's hard to make children around the age of 13, 14, and 15 believe that they need 10 to 12 hours of sleep, just as it is hard to make them believe they are not yet grown up. As a result of loss of sleep, boys and girls 13 to 15 are often listless and tired most of the time, and unable to concentrate on their lessons.



Here's another question which we shall answer today. "We do a great deal of entertaining," writes this mother, "and sometimes it is very inconvenient for us to put our little boy to bed early. Do you think that being up late, say one or two evenings a week, could actually harm the child?"

It probably could. If you accustom your child to a regular bedtime, from infancy, you not only help his chances for normal development of body and mind, but you also simplify your own problems of child management, for, as years pass, your child will continue to go quietly and unquestioningly to bed. The early bedtime habit -- 6 o'clock during infancy and not later than 7 during early childhood -- should be unbroken.

Better not keep him up to entertain visitors, or go to the movies. It is unwise to give in to a child who begs to stay up, "just this one time." Permitting him to lose sleep leads to a vicious circle: Loss of sleep makes him irritable and over-active, and overactivity makes him restless and wakeful, so that on following evenings it becomes harder and harder to get him to go to bed. On the other hand, a child who goes to bed tranquilly is likely to sleep well, and to be easy to manage the next day.

One more question, and then we'll write a menu. It's a good menu, too, as I'm sure you will agree.

The last question is about children who go to bed readily enough, but stay awake, or sleep fitfully. There may be several reasons for fitful sleep.

Has the child had enough active play during the day to tire his muscles? Is his physical condition good? Does he have a bed to himself? Is the bed comfortable? The spring and mattress should be firm and flat, not sagging in the middle. If a pillow is used, it should be thin, and not too soft. Sheets should be large, so that the edges will stay tucked in all night; the blankets light in weight, and wide enough to keep out drafts. For a child who kicks off the covers try a sleeping bag.

Are the child's nightclothes comfortable? They should be loose, so that there is no binding. Of course the child should be entirely undressed before his night-clothes are put on.

Is the room at a comfortable temperature, with plenty of fresh air from open windows? Is the child's supper satisfying, and easily digested? Do you try to prevent loud or sudden noises from reaching the child's room? His bedroom should be as far as possible from the radio.

Before we leave the subject of sleep, I want to mention an excellent leaflet which has been published recently by the Children's Bureau of the Department of Labor. This leaflet is called: "Why Sleep?" It discusses in detail problems which confront most all of us. I shall be very glad to send you a copy of this leaflet. It is free.

Now let's concentrate on dinner. The Menu Specialist must have known this was a children's program, for she has planned a dinner which is ideal for children and for their parents, too.





10/9/29

The main dish is an omelet -- didn't I tell you just last week how important eggs are in the diet? This isn't a plain omelet, it's a Spanish omelet -- you'll find the recipes for the omelet and for the Spanish sauce, in the Radio Cookbook.

Let's see what else we're having today: Spanish Omelet; Baked Potatoes; Celery Hearts; and a Pear, Cream Cheese, and Lettuce Salad. With the salad, serve crackers, or thin crisp toast. A dessert is not necessary with this salad.

As you may remember, the Spanish Sauce for the Spanish Omelet requires a half cup of chopped celery. When you prepare this dinner, use the outer stalks of the celery in the sauce, and save the hearts for serving raw.

Once more, let's repeat the menu: Spanish Omelet; Baked Potatoes; Celery Hearts; Pear, Cream Cheese, and Lettuce Salad; Crackers or thin crisp Toast.

Where could you find a better meal than that? Milk and eggs and vegetable and fruit, and crisp toast, which will help develop strong teeth.

Tomorrow: "The Care of the Bathroom."

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